

THE PEOPLE TAKE THE LAND

De Beauvoir Playspace

About a month ago, parents and children in the de Beauvoir area of Hackney decided to take over an empty plot of land and turn it into a play space. The area has now been cleared of rubbish, ropes slung between trees, a derelict prefab salvaged and painted, and the playground in daily use by dozens of kids throughout the Easter holidays. The decision by the local residents to take matters into their own hands came after pressure on Hackney Council to do something failed to produce anything.

The new unofficial playground at the junction of Downham and Ufton Rds. (see map) is in fact just across the road from the vast de Beauvoir New Town Estate, still being extended, contains an estimated 1,500 children. But the only provision for their play are two small areas of swings and climbing frames for toddlers. Repeated attempts to have better use made of grass areas within the estate have met with bureaucratic stonewalling. The only play facility in the entire old part of de Beauvoir (roughly bounded by Downham, Englefield, Kingsland and Balls Pond Roads) is a slide, a roundabout and four swings in de Beauvoir Square. For older children, nothing approaching the adventure-style playgrounds so popular in other parts of London.



Until recently, the council could complacently add that there was not room for it either. But in the last few months the situation has radically changed. There are now seven empty plots in de Beauvoir, most of which originally contained war-time prefabs, and



all Borough property. Because of the Council's slowness in fencing them off, most of them have been steadily buried deep in domestic and industrial rubbish. Hackney says that it will eventually use it for much needed new housing. But, with current procedures, that could take several years, and the renovation programme for the area is already well behind schedule. Meantime, several of the sites are ideally suited for short-term playgrounds.

Last November, the de Beauvoir Association (the local residents group) wrote to the Council suggesting just that, especially since 'Clean Up Hackney' was then the current slogan. As with a second letter this March, no reply was received. The only response was a suggestion that the Council might eventually open a playground as part of its General Improvement Area for southern de Beauvoir. The result of the Council's disinterest is the community's own new playground in Ufton Road. An application has been made to the ILEA for finance, and the aim is eventually to have a full-time playleader. But at the moment the playgroup is being entirely manned and run by local parents. Anyone who can give time to man the site, especially on weekdays, or can offer equipment, materials or advice, should contact one of the following:
Liz Paton: 249-5646. Christie Chamberlain: 249-4375. Frances Haste: 249-2353.

Any kids who live nearby should just go along.

Crispin Aubrey

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

This paper has come out of a merger between the "Hackney Gutter Press" and "Hackney Action", and we aim, by pooling resources and energies to produce the paper every month if possible. One thing the paper needs is to get as many as possible of the people and groups who are active in the area, to be involved in making the paper - writing articles, helping to produce, and/or distribute the paper.

Come along and get involved:

WORKING MEETINGS - EVERY THURSDAY EVENING FROM 7pm AT CENTERPRISE

Published by Hackney People's Press, 34 Dalston Lane, E.8.

Printed by EXPRESSION, 5, Kingsbury Rd., N.1.

Material is not copyright except to profit making organisations. All articles are the responsibility of the contributor, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Hackney People's Press.

CONTENTS

Trades Council, Learning Exchange
Hackney Teachers' Strike
After Six, Letters
Cinema Closures, Ringway Dropped?
Kingsmead Estate
Haggerston Food Co-op, S-N 5
Tony Soares, Dalston Storm?
Information, WEA Music Course
William Morris and May Day

2
3
4
5
6,7
8
9
10,11
12

HACKNEY TRADES COUNCIL

Hackney Trades Council organised a meeting in March supposedly to organise action against the wage freeze. The meeting is over a month old now, but in view of the scarcity of T.C. meetings. And the complete

blackout by the Gazette, as is usual with them when real political issues are discussed, as opposed to the repotage of the soap powder politics of the major parties, as demonstrated in their speak to the people' GLC series. In view of this I feel it important to comment.

CIVIL SERVANTS

A speaker from the Civil Servants Union (CPSA) said that before he started to speak he wished to make it clear that he was not, on any account, going to criticise his union leadership, or that of the TUC as a whole. Incredible. The whole question today of organising workers to bring this government down and to effect socialist policies, is one of not just criticising the leadership in the Labour Movement, but one of changing it. If it weren't for the workers leadership we'd have socialism now.

TEACHERS

Pat Fitton (NUT) gave a good speech on the struggle of teachers to form a Union, and how they were the first to take a wage cut in the 20's. She explained how teachers didn't even have such basic safeguards as the Factories Act to turn to in defence of working conditions. There were in fact no rules, legal or otherwise, which laid down the conditions under which they have to work. There was no provision in their contracts of employment for meal or tea breaks. To see their contracts they had to go to an office in Central London where the big bound volume

was kept. Frequent amendments were made to this, which if they didn't go along to see, were made without their knowledge.

HOSPITAL WORKERS

But the only speaker with anything really concrete to offer was Alec Porter, ancillary worker from St. Leonards Hospital. The only way, he said to defeat the state pay laws, was to organise a general strike to bring this government down, and re-elect a Labour government pledged to socialist policies. A chink of light in the collaborationist fog. The chairman (Communist Party Member) described Alec's prophesy that a communistic state would come about with the right leadership, as "the optimism of youth", as obviously opposed to the cynicism of an old Stalinist

MAY DAY

A supporter of the Communist Party then got up to say that anyone who criticised May Day in any way, was an extreme left winger, and thus by some bizarre geometrics, allied themselves with the extreme right wing. Let's have dancing in the streets like the good old days he said. No criticism of the TUC's decision, and the Communist Party endorsement, that the Day of Action and

Protest, as demanded by workers two months previously in anger against the state pay laws, should be combined with May Day. Thus dampening the rising tide of rank and file revolt against the Tories. No criticism of this, but no worry, May Day will see singing and dancing in the streets etc. Workers will not be dancing in the streets, until they're dancing in the remains of a defeated Tory government, and are on the

way to establishing true socialism in this country. With the diversions of the Communist Party or not.

COUNCIL OF ACTION

A spokesman from the recently formed North London Council of Action then got up to announce a rally they were holding that week. This was organised in protest against rising prices, the state pay laws, the arming of the police, and in support of all workers in conflict against the government. He agreed with Alec Porter that the fundamental question at the moment, was one of working class leadership, and that this must be settled before socialism can ever be contemplated in this country.

MEETING ERUPTS

After this the meeting erupted into what was at times an extremely violent argument, falling roughly between a small contingent from the Socialist Labour League (Trotskyist) and a much larger number of Communist Party (Stalinist) members. It was during this argument that the real value came out of the meeting with the Socialist Labour League criticising the Trade's Council attitude to May Day at the be all and end all of workers protest against the government. Michael Knowles, Trade's Council secretary, wound up the meeting by saying, quite sincerely I believe, "Why do we always have to finish up arguing". I think he misses the point, unity at what cost?

After the meeting, the SLL pressed him as to why the SLL and other political factions were not allowed representation on the May Day committee. He replied that of course they were democratic, and they were invited along to the next meeting. A member of the SLL



received a letter a week later to say that a mistake had been made, and they couldn't come after all.

OPINION

N.B. These views are obviously my own, they do not represent in any way the view of Hackney People's Paper, in fact the reverse is likely to be true.

Be that as it may the Trade's Council obviously will disagree with my view that unless they are prepared to see themselves capable, (and having been a member of the Trades Council I don't think they are), of transformation into a body such as the Council of Action. Where all the working class is represented that is, OAP's, housewives, claimants, non-union labour etc., all with equal voting rights. Unless they're prepared to set themselves on this path, and not be tied to the apron strings of the TUC bureaucracy, or the domination of the Communist Party which they are subject to at the moment. Unless they can make a break with these trends, and establish themselves as a democratic workers organisation. Unless they can do this, in the present period they are as dead as a dinosaur.

CHRIS SWIFT

We will give the Trades Council equal representation in this paper if they wish to reply.

learning exchange

The Learning Exchange is a free service for the 3 boroughs of Islington, Tower Hamlets and Hackney, which puts people interested in learning about the same subject in touch with each other. The hope is that they will eventually start their own courses, projects, discussion groups etc. It can also put people in touch with resource people, and provide a way for those who may never have thought of themselves as teachers - but who know to read, weld or play a guitar - to share their knowledge.

The idea developed from meetings of people who had each read Ivan Illich's book 'Deschooling Society' with great excitement and immediately came up against the frustration of not being able to find anybody else excited about it. The Exchange is run by volunt-

teers, some of whom are now finding out what is available in the way of educational facilities (workshops, darkrooms etc) and equipment (projectors, computers etc) in the 3 boroughs as well as information on courses and societies. Anyone who would like to help with this would be very welcome.

The Exchange is basically a telephone and a filing cabinet. Users are given the names and telephone numbers or addresses of those who may have made the same or complementary requests.

Below is a catalogue of requests made up to the time of publication. Especially urgent are the requests for a good blues guitarist teacher, and a resource person on ancient Greek and Roman history, which the Learning Exchange has been unable to fulfil.

CODE: I = Interest match, or those wanting to contact others interested in the same subject; L = Learner, those who want a teacher or resource person; T = Teacher or resource person.

ART (painting)	I	INTERIOR DESIGN	T
(sketching)	T	LATHE	L
BIOLOGY	T	MEDICINE	T
CLARINET	L	MUSIC (13th Century)	I
COMPUTERS	T	MADRIGALS	I
ENGLISH language	T	NAHUA POETRY	I
ELECTRONICS	T	PHILOSOPHY	T
FRENCH	T	PHOTOGRAPHY	I
FOLK MUSIC	I	PLANNING (Council Estate)	I
FREE SCHOOL	I	POP CONCERT Organising	L
FLUTE	L	READING	I
GERMAN	T	RECORDER	L
GUITAR	T	SCREEN PRINTING	T
GUITAR (blues)	I	RUSSIAN	I
GLASS Blowing	L	TECHNOLOGY (Alternative)	I
HARP (blues)	L	Videotape	T
HISTORY (ancient Greek & Roman)	L	WELDING	L

CONTACT THE LEARNING EXCHANGE AT CENTERPRISE, 34, Dalston lane. E.8. ENQUIRIES - PHONE 254-1620.

HACKNEY TEACHERS ON STRIKE

Susan, Elaine and Isabel are typical of many young teachers in Hackney, often teaching oversize classes in inadequate classrooms. For these young teachers starting their working life in London the job is not just to teach but also to live on an all too inadequate income. It's a difficult enough job in the best of conditions, but all the harder when you have to travel for perhaps an hour to get to school because of the difficulty of finding somewhere to live. Understandably many teachers leave London, a fact which leads to serious educational difficulties and a breakdown in the relationship between pupil and teacher. The average turnover of teachers in London is 17% a year, but in some of the harder hit areas it is more than twice this figure. One school in Hackney lost 10 of its 15 teachers over a 3 month period and in another every teacher left within a year with the exception of the Headmaster.

TEACHERS LEAVING

Teachers leaving in such large numbers leave a very serious gap in the teaching force in the area. A gap which often out of necessity is filled with young teachers in their first year of teaching, who in their first job may be faced with difficult situations because of the fact that many of the children they are teaching have had 2, 3, maybe 4 different teachers that year already.

EFFECTS ON CHILD

Certainly the most obvious casualty is the relationship between the pupils and the teacher. If a teacher has taught in an area for any length of time he will know something about the local children, the life of the area, and the environment - with this sort of background the teachers job is eased. The teacher will have an experience of teaching behind him, and experience of teaching the children of the area, and will be better equipped to handle the more awkward and difficult children. He may also be far more able to identify the needs and difficulties of individual children. A school with a stable staff is better able to follow the child's progress through the school, to compare teachers' views and to pick up problems. Teachers who teach a child over a number of years find the

so-called 'problem of discipline' less and less important. Without a degree of stability it is very difficult for the teacher to be able to compare his view of the child with that of another teacher who may have taught that child some years before in order to get an idea of the child's development. The child becomes a face, a unit rather than an individual, the child feels neglected, even rejected by those who teach him - with the inevitable consequence that he rejects them and their approaches.

DIFFICULTIES

Our inner city schools have many difficulties to contend with, before you consider the problem of teacher turnover which magnifies all the difficulties. Literacy surveys of inner city areas have identified large numbers of poor readers - whilst there are many more reasons behind these figures, a contributory factor is the high movement of teachers out of these areas.

UNSETTLED

Try asking your child or children in your area how many teachers they have had in the secondary school in Mathematics, Science, History Geography or English, or in the primary school how many form teachers they have had in a year and then try and place yourself in their position. Coming to your school at the beginning of a new term as they will in May, facing teachers who have never seen you before or who have never taught in the area before, or who are starting their first job. It's like moving schools every term, it's not good for the children, for the teachers, or for the schools.

ON STRIKE

In London recently the teachers went out on a three day strike and staged massive demonstrations almost unparalleled in the history of London teachers, in support of their claim for an increase in the London Allowance. They were asking for £300, an increase of £182 on the present allowance of \$118 and the local authorities had indicated that they were willing to offer £200. The Government offered £15 and that is where it stands. Teachers throughout England and Wales have received an



Teachers' Demonstration. March 1.

increase on average of £127 this year in line with the government's £1+4% policy. Whilst money has been set aside for the settlement of the London Teachers Allowance this will undoubtedly fall far short of the £200 the Local Authorities were prepared to pay.

HOUSING

Probably housing is the single largest factor in forcing teachers to move out of London. Few young teachers ever contemplate buying a house on salaries which start at £1297 and can be below £2,000 on scale 3. Since the allowance of £118 was decided house prices have risen 76% on

average in London. At the same time rented accommodation is becoming increasingly difficult to find as more and more landlords find it more profitable to sell. Perhaps part of the solution may lie in providing more living units for teachers - at present the GLC have only 75 such units for the whole of London. Teachers stand very little chance of being considered for the already overcrowded housing lists of local councils because during their training they have lived outside the area and may well be in the area for only two years.

Dick Whitburn



after six in hackney

After Six is an evening information service for homeless people who are not considered eligible for housing by Local Authorities; principally for homeless single people. We're not suggesting that homeless single people shouldn't be housed by the council, of course they should. And there is nothing in the 1948 National Assistance Act to say that they should not also be provided with temporary part three accommodation in the same circumstances as homeless families. But in practice it doesn't work out like that, and someone without dependent children who isn't old enough to want to go into an old people's home hasn't an earthly hope of being housed by a local authority in London if he becomes homeless. Not that all the homeless families are housed of course, but at least local councils admit a general responsibility for families, and we're not offering to relieve them of it. So if any social workers are reading this - don't rush to the phone to unload all your problems, because that's not what we're here for.

HELP AVAILABLE

We're called After Six because that's when we operate every evening when we get home from work. We are not an organisation and have no money. We are two people with a phone and a lot of addresses of various types of accommodation which may be of use to people who are homeless or about to become so.

While our main aim is to assist homeless people, we also think it valuable to gather information about the housing requirements and difficulties of single people. We have an extensive 'library' of books, pamphlets and press cuttings which anyone interested is welcome to see. We have a brief, anonymous record of every enquiry we have received since we started at the beginning of November last year. During November, December and January we had 301 enquiries of which 240 were about accommodation, involving 320 individuals, not including children. Of these 67 enquiries involving 53 men and 28 women were from people who were native to north east London. Their ages range from 15 to 75 but most were under 30. Besides

single people on their own they included 8 childless couples and 11 families 7 of them single parent families. 32% were actually homeless when they first made contact with us; the others were about to become so.

EVICCTIONS

The most common reason for homelessness was eviction from a furnished tenancy, in every case illegal in the sense that it did not follow a court order. Several people had been harassed. One West Indian couple said that they had arrived home from work to find that their new absentee landlord had changed the locks. They had gone to the police to complain and been told it was nothing to do with the police. They ended up in a bed and breakfast place paying far more than they could afford.

An active pensioner living in a furnished flat in Stoke Newington complained that the two other tenants who shared his meters never put in any money, so he either had to go cold or pay three people's fuel bills. He gave in his notice thinking it should be easy enough to find another flat for £3 per week; it wasn't. Four sixteen year olds were in care, two to Hackney and two to Islington, one living in bed and breakfast accommodation at the expense of Islington council; I was told that the hostel for young people leaving children's homes had an impossibly long waiting list. Another 17 yr. old was sleeping rough after having to leave a children's home, again in Islington. What a way to start your adult life.

SECURITY ?

In the last couple of weeks we have heard from several people who were given our number when they called at a Social Services area office after 5 o'clock. One mother, just evicted from a G.L.C. flat, was quite distraught, afraid the police would take her children into care. It appears that Hackney Council do not intend to make any alternative arrangements for dealing with out of hours emergencies while the social workers and civil servants are on strike.

FEWER FLATS

Last month we did a spot check on accommodation immediately available to homeless single people throughout Greater London. In Hackney we received information from 11 addresses - boarding houses and hostels - with 355 beds between them of which 20 were empty, at the time. But this means little to the people who come to us for help of whom the great majority want private tenancies. And here is the stumbling block. Hackney already has a proportion of single person households, and of furnished tenancies, above the Greater London average. It also has a policy of increasing the public sector in housing which involves pulling down the older terraced houses where most furnished accommodation is to be found, as in the Leswin Rd., area currently "under study", and building council flats for which only families with dependent children are normally eligible. And it is Hackney's stated policy not to rehouse furnished tenants in a redevelopment area. True, under the new Land Compensation Bill which should soon become law it will have to do this, but only if the tenant has lived at the same address for over 7 years, and with a national average change of address rate of 5 years per dwelling, this will count most people out. In the meantime, growing scarcity of value is pushing up the rents asked for furnished rooms, and single tenants are to be excluded from the new rent rebate scheme. Accommodation agencies do not help the situation by illegally charging commission to prospective tenants, contrary to the 1953 Accommodation Agencies Act. So what are single people to do if they want to stay in the borough?

CONTACTS

We're intending to comb the shop notice boards of north east London over a two week period this spring, looking for likely adverts, which we can then check out and see if the landladies regularly have rooms to let and can take tenants at short notice if necessary. If you're willing to help us, for however short a time or if you already know of a room to let, or if you have any other ideas, we'd like to hear from you, so please phone Neil and Jill at 249-2847 any evening after 6.

AFTER SIX - INFORMATION SERVICE AND STUDY GROUP ON HOMELESSNESS. 6, TYSSSEN ROAD, N.16.

LETTERS

25 Channock Rd. Clapton, E.5.

Dear Sirs,
My wife and I have lived in Hackney for nearly two years, and during the time have become very aware of the problems and bad conditions which face other people in the borough; to name the obvious: bad housing, poor educational facilities - eg. only one nursery school in the entire borough, and a high birth rate which aggravates all else.

This is yet another housing story - not solely ours, but one that affects most wanting decent local authority housing.

We, like many more here, live in private rented accommodation and ours, like many more, is in part, hardly fit for human habitation. Since our first autumn the roof has leaked, become progressively worse; now when it rains it runs into the bathroom, hall and kitchen; the landlord shows little intention of putting all right.

We have been harassed since 1971, been to rent tribunals and so on - my wife is upset, our small child is disturbed and I have a lot to catch up in my full-time studies for a degree.

This is still not our story. For being 'good' tenants, we now finally face eviction. It is enough for our landlord to be so fortunate while we live as we do at the moment. However, when yet another family is made homeless and there are more than 10,000 applications on the waiting list (ever-increasing) for council housing, it is unendurable if nothing can be done when our landlord owns freehold property which provides residential accommodation, has tenants other than us, has his own business, employs other people, owns two cars, holidays in Europe, and continues to live in a Local Authority maisonette.

Clearly, he prevents one family being rehoused by the Council. What is more stark though is the information from social workers, campaign centres, publicity groups and others that this is not uncommon, even in this borough. In fact I wonder how common it actually is - how many families are waiting on that list who need not be, and only are because, perhaps even their own landlords are housed in council houses?

May I seriously suggest that the Housing Dept., with the Housing committee, sifts through all its tenancies, and does more of the job it is supposed to do, not in providing housing on the cheap for those who neither need nor deserve it, but in giving to more of those who do deserve it the opportunity to put some quality into their lives and homes?

Mr. Paul Wood.

**all readers'
letters
welcome**

who raped our screens?

5

Hackney now has only six cinemas amongst a population of over 200,000, and one of those, the Dalston Tatler, is for members only. The Stamford Hill Odeon closed only a few months ago, largely on the pretext that the Dalston Odeon has been converted into three separate screens. At the same time, prices at Dalston have gone up to a minimum of 55p.



Compared with Tower Hamlets, Hackney is still relatively well off. In the whole of Tower Hamlets there is only one full time cinema - the Mile End ABC. Islington, to the west, is hardly much better catered for. Both the ABC and the Odeon recently closed, leaving the trendy Screen on the Green as the sole survivor. Of course the fact that there's a cinema a mile or so away is hardly of interest to people who want to spend the evening at their local picture house. They're even less likely to be able to fork out the £2 or £3 needed for a trip into the West End. Who then is to blame for the rape of our screens? The circuits, ABC and Rank, say that

ODEON

it's partly the fact that people spend more time watching TV and partly because their cinemas were built to pull in audiences of 1000's which now makes them white elephants. If they can't afford to do what they've done at Dalston then they 'reluctantly' have to close down. In fact there's a lot more to it than that. Both ABC and Rank are owned by large commercial conglomerates in which cinemas play only a small part. Rank, for instance

gets most of its profits from the highly successful Rank Xerox operation, £29 out of a total of £45 million in 1971 to be exact. The ABC circuit is part of the massive EMI group, whose major income is from records, radio and television. But together these two giants control almost a third of the 1,500 cinemas in Britain. Rank has been getting out of all but its most profitable cinemas for some time now. Between 1954 and 1963 it disposed of over 200 sites. The process is described as 'rationalisation' and would probably have been even faster if it wasn't that the box office takings provided a ready form of 'cash flow' - which means money to invest elsewhere. The company's attempt to cash in on the youth pop market (converting three former cinemas into Sundowns) has already been abandoned, presumably because the profit wasn't big enough. The closure of the Sundown in Mile End Road will mean that 800 teenagers who flocked there on Saturday nights now have nowhere to go for local entertainment. The already bad relations between East End kids and the police are unlikely to be helped. ABC/EMI's 'rationalisation' hasn't been so dramatic. It still runs three Hackney cinemas, whilst Rank has only one. But EMI knows which side its bread is buttered. Its profits from property development, including old cinema sites, increased from virtually nothing to £1 million in a single year, and the latest scheme is to turn part of Tottenham Court Rd. into a giant leisure centre. The other side of the coin



is that Rank and EMI's 500 odd cinemas are mainly in the prime city centre and suburban areas. If a major film doesn't get a release on one of the two big circuits then it stands little chance of making a profit. The circuits thus control to a great extent what we do or don't see on the screen. Even the two smaller cinema chains operating in the London area, Granada and Classic, have to depend to a large extent on second runs of films from which ABC and Rank have taken the first bite. Classic was taken over last year by property developer Laurie Marsh, and although at the moment he is rightly expanding the

business, there is no doubt that he will soon jack out if he doesn't find the film industry to the liking of

classic

his shareholders. One of his latest plans is to convert cinemas into squash courts, a change which means little capital outlay but a quick and steady return. None of the profits currently being made out of redundant cinemas will of course be seen by the people who work in them, often for pitiable wages. Usherettes can still earn under £10 per week for a job involving awkward evening hours. Projectionists, and even some managers, don't do much better. A cunning distinction between male attendants and female receptionists means that the largely female cinema staff are paid less for exactly the same job as their male counterparts. Women, especially the large number of part-timers, also tend not to join unions. If you can't afford to go to the few local cinemas left, or you don't fancy the films, then the only alternative locally is Hackney Film Society, which shows films every Thursday at Dalston Library. The Society is also organising a Film Festival this May. Details from Suzanne Lang, 94a, Gore Road, E9, or ask at your local library. During the winter months you can also see films FREE, yes free, at several local libraries in the neighbouring boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Islington. As more commercial cinemas close their doors, Hackney should clearly follow suit.



Crispin Aubrey

HOMES SAVED FROM RINGWAY

"People whose homes and way of living have been so long in the path of the inner ringways may rest assured that the existing plans are scrapped." This was how Sir Reg Goodwin, the new leader of the GLC confirmed the cancellation of the proposed inner ringway system on the day of Labour's victory in the GLC elections. He also promised that those council houses blighted by the motorway plans would "if habit-

able, be brought back to scratch and let."

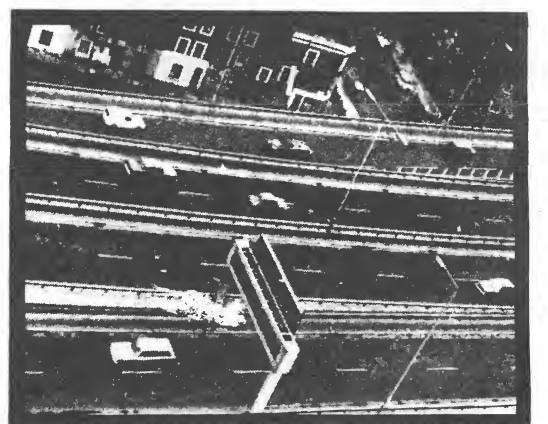
It is a great relief for people in this borough that plans to drive a £40m. motorway through the middle of it have been dropped. The stretch from Dalston to Hackney Wick, following the south side of the railway, would have brought down over 1,000 houses, and made living in many more almost intolerable. Thousands of Hackney families would have been driven out to suit the dev-

elopers, the contractors, the concrete tycoons, etc.

Dropping the ringway plans has saved vast sums of money, which, the Labour Party promised before the elections, would be used for improving public transport, and for buying up rented property from London's parasitic landlords. It would be naive to expect much to come of all this - Labour in power have disappointed us all so often in the past. But there are some grounds

for hope and pressure must be kept up on the party so that something materialises from these promises.

Steve Davies.



OBSERVATIONS

At the beginning of April I visited approx. 30 flats on Kingsmead with letters of appeal against the proposed rent increases. I had my doubts about this appeal and the Tenants Association and the effectiveness of this campaign and these were later confirmed by the people I spoke to there.

From speaking to tenants and from giving a little thought to the nature of this campaign, I am forced to draw the following conclusions.

That the "Fair Rents" campaign is a propaganda stunt by the Citizens Rights Office with the collaboration of the TA, which will not help tenants defeat the act but rather divert them from action, towards protest.

And protest to who? A Tory government that took the milk away from the schoolkids. I do not object to the letters of appeal in principle, but when, in practice, they are used as the be all and end all of the campaign. Used as an attempt to spread illusions about getting concessions from the most rabid anti-working class government for over a century, then this is only leading workers up the garden path. I would like to think that the people behind the campaign have do-gooder mentality or are just plain stupid. But more likely in my opinion, is that the proposed rent increases are to be used by the Citizen Rights as a guinea pig to create a legal precedent in which their name, or that of the Tenants Association (read Jack Shepherd), will dominate.

JACK SHEPHERD

When I first decided to do an article on Kingsmead Estate, I thought the most logical thing to do first would be to go along and have an interview with Jack Shepherd, the Tenants Association "leader". I thought wrong.

Mr. Shepherd sought assurances that I would not attempt to put down the Tenants Association or blacken his name. I said then and I say now, I'm not out to attack the concept of the TA. In the same way as I wouldn't attack a Trade Union, just its leadership, I'm not out to attack the TA, just its so called leadership. And as to blackening his name, I don't think I need do that. Needless to say I won't be printing his interview, because as far as I'm concerned he doesn't represent the tenants or their interests. He seems to get regular space put aside for him in the Gazette anyway.

What I will do is print what people said to me, which in my opinion represents a fair consensus of opinion on the estate.

DICK RAWLINGSON

Claimants
Union Representative for the
Estate.

"I would say that to 99% of the people on the estate, the Tenants Association doesn't exist. I know for a fact that it wasn't represented at the recently held London Federation of Tenants Association. Jack Shepherd was notified

of this meeting, he never went and neither did he make any arrangements for Kingsmead to be represented there. They voted there to withhold all rent increases, which probably is why he didn't want to be involved."

"We recently organised a meeting at the hall on the estate for the C.U. about 150 or more attended. At least a third of the people on this estate are drawing Social Security benefit, a large proportion of which are unsupported mothers. The other two-thirds are just barely making a living. People come to me rather than Jack Shepherd, on all sorts of questions not just concerning the C.U."

COUNCIL OF ACTION

The eventual aim will be to form a local Council of Action, and to be represented on a national body such as the All Trades Union Alliance. But the important thing at the moment is to get people unified around the Claimants Union."

"As far as the letters of appeal are concerned, it seems to me that half a dozen old-fogies on the TA committee got together and decided it would be a good idea. Both Jack Shepherd and Stuart Weir seem to be working for the council rather than the tenants. They certainly seem more in touch with what the GLC thinks rather than the tenants on the estate. Jack Shepherd makes a thing out of his constant visits to County Hall, supposedly on behalf of the tenants. "They all know us (TA Comm) up there" he says, I suspect one of the reasons for his numerous visits, is so that he can watch their colour TV while waiting."

TENANTS' FIGHT

The Claimants Union has really shown the need for organisation on this estate, and has really demonstrated contrary to the opinions of Jack Shepherd and others that tenants will work and fight for their rights, once they're given a lead.

"At the moment we are working to organise people around the claimants union, but there is no doubt that the CU is just a start. The CU has provided the impetus for a broad based movement to come into being on the estate. An Action Committee if you like, encompassing entertainment, recreation, claimants, tenants associations, O.A.P.s, youth clubs and lots more. "The tenants are now beginning to wake up to the fact that the estate is theirs and that with a little energy, initiative and guts they can do with it what they like".

The GLC has stopped Lodgers Fee and we see no reason why the SS can't do the same. If anyone has any complaints they should come to us not the Rent Office; not only do we know more but we will do something positive for them. A lot more needs to be done for O.A.P.s and we intend to see that it is.

CLAIMANTS' UNION

"At the CU meeting the other night there was enough work to keep us occupied continuously for six months, to get people their correct benefit; some claims date back four years, one man is owed over £200 by the SS for benefit he didn't know he could claim. We intend to make sure that he gets it. I've no time for Jack Shepherd and neither have any of the other tenants. Ask people if they want to go to Shepherd for help, and the reply wouldn't be printable. The Tenants Association is now dead, and any real Tenants Association will come out of the CU, which is receiving tremendous support and enthusiasm.

There is a need on the estate for police patrols, a recent spate of air gun shootings has emphasised the need for this. Some young people have had to have hospital treatment after being hit by pellets; in the evenings youths walk around the estate openly brandishing air guns. I would like to know what Local Charges are for on this estate; if they're for wash-rooms then why don't they open them?

NO REPAIRS

There have not been any visible repairs to this estate for a very long time, as long as any one here can remember. We see a work van come in every morning with big letters G.L.C. on the side but after that we don't see it again. We need decent plumbing on this estate with no backflows. Our (the CU) position on the rent increases has not been worked out yet. We oppose it but as the SS pays it, whether we like it or not we are in a tricky situation. But certainly if, as a result of the increases, anyone takes home less benefit, we will fight it.

ORGANISING

As far as the spectre of evictions is concerned, something Jack Shepherd always uses as his trump card against action, we would not let anybody on this estate be evicted without one hell of a fight. We will organise barricades, cordon off the estate if necessary. The days when they could come in and evict someone in relative peace are all over. As far as the tenants are concerned Shepherd is non-existent; The TA is a one man band. No fees for membership have been collected in the last three years.

Now that the G.L.C. has gone Labour we are in a position where we can really put pressure on it to do something for the working man rather than against him. Within 3 or 4 months we shall be sufficiently organised to put really effective pressure on it.

We are tired of a youth club that is run by outsiders, we don't want our kids locked up in there every night like a prison. We're not prepared to put up with this situation any longer. If the centre is for us we want to run it, as we see fit. If it's not then we'll build our own.

"There is no question of changing the T.A. leadership, the whole thing must be pushed aside and an action committee set up. Jack Shepherd seems to have a solitary obsession with transport in this area. I would like to see a vote taken among the tenants to see whether they want the T.A. or an Action Committee. There's no room on this estate for Jack Shepherd and me, one of us has to go. There has to be a clear choice between Jack Shepherd and his sheep or an Action Committee that will unite all tenants to defend their rights and to create reasonable facilities on this estate.



ESTATE



MRS. HUGHES

New TA Committee Member.

"This is 1973. I should think that in the last five years about half the tenancies on this estate have changed hands. More influence from new members is needed. Who started up the TA? The vicar down the road, and he or the church don't seem to have much to do with it since. Apart from their meetings at the centre which they seem to arrange very easily as opposed to anyone else who wants to use it.

Therefore it seems necessary to pull away from the influence of the church, and get better representation from new tenants.

"When I originally applied for a council flat I asked for one near my husband's work. This they said they could not do but would put me somewhere temporary, I was there 7 years.

It was obviously a deliberate move to move us into the situation we're now in (depending on benefit). Due to enforced poverty resulting in hospitalisation, caused by similar conditions to those on Kingsmead. We were allocated this flat on Kingsmead for health reasons!

The intentions at County Hall are pretty obvious.

The council up here know what the conditions are like on this estate. What are they going to do now that Labour is back in power. Anything concrete?

PROBLEM LANDLORD

It's pretty obvious that there has been an appalling state of maintenance on this estate for the last twenty years. The only solution would be to re house all of us in a more humane environment. It has been the policy of the council to put "problem" families on this estate. I say the real problem is the landlord. Aggravation from problem landlord, or aggravation from problem tenants, what's the difference? The aggravation I get is from workmen who are tied to a system that doesn't enable them to carry out repairs properly. The aggravation I give is constant registered letters of complaint. What's the point of having a Director of Housing just to sign 100s of letters he doesn't bother to read, and to receive O.B.E.s?

If it's beyond his power to do something why doesn't he pass it on to someone who can?

There's always talk of landlords' agents investigating bad living conditions. I suggest that the agents need investigating themselves. Only a sick society could provide such living conditions and get away with it.

Another thing about this estate is discrimination against people just because they live here. I know of some specific instances regarding youth clubs that bear this out. I know from personal experience that there are 2 Youth Clubs in this area, that do not allow kids from Kingsmead in. Pedro and Nye Bevan. I know from personal experience of one boy who only managed to get into Nye Bevan Youth Club because he used a false address!

There is another point about the Tenants Association: the complete lack of interest by them and the church into facilities for teenagers. If the Church can advertise and bring in people for other things, why can't these people, charities, authorities etc. provide money and equipment; facilities and room for our teenagers to organise themselves and be responsible for their own activities. Instead of isolating them and condoning vandalism. I say no because their intentions are pretty obviously to back up the rest of the aggro already mentioned, therefore excusing themselves from any blame.

Another tenant who had just joined the Claimants Union said:

"I think the CU and organisations like it should be given all the publicity they can get and more and more people should be drawn into it"

"I've had enough of bureaucratic institutions. After my own experiences of them I will never allow them to put people down on Kingsmead, or anywhere else like they tried with me. Too much paper work, it's a waste of government money. These people on benefit are forced where they are because of the system. The people on the other side of the counter should be made to realise that they may be on this side one day, then perhaps their attitude would change. What is needed is social workers; people on the SS, a lot of them, are mentally disturbed because of the situation they've been forced into. Authority is like a hen sitting on an egg (us); one day that egg will hatch.

BIRDMAN OF ALCATRAZ

There is too much fragmentation, we are all working towards 'he same end. Disunity is not conducive towards organisation.. We must unite to break this system. I intend to work with the Claimants Union to see this come about. We are reaching a stage where the people with the power are becoming unreceptive unobtainable and unreachable, and invisible. I feel like the Man from Alcatraz, pinned down by authority and power, with an overwhelming desire to be free. But I intend to break out before I die".

MRS. SMITH

Tenant and member of Claimants Union.

"I have got hundreds of complaints about my flat and about this estate in general. The shutters are always getting blocked up with rubbish and the noise from the kids is really terrible even though I'm on the top floor. In one room we had to pull all the wallpaper that had been put up, after a sheet of it fell on my baby while it was sleeping. That and another room have got really bad cracks in the ceiling. But although I've told the council numerous times they don't do a thing. I've been trying to get some electric fires for my kids' rooms, but I've had no success up to yet. I'm hoping that we've got the Claimants' Union going we can really get things moving. We only see the tenants association once a year and that's to try and collect their membership fee. All they do is blah, blah, blah and nothing gets done.

The Claimants' union is the greatest thing that has happened on this estate and I only wish I'd heard of it before. If we're going to get anything done we must be united and that's what the Claimants' Union is doing."



Her daughter was of similar opinion:

"The system of the SS must be changed. Constant waiting about, being abused by the clerks, we don't want that ANY more. We're tired of being treated like second class citizens. When you're down the SS office with your kids the clerks shout out over the speakers "Keep them bloody kids quiet". We're not having that any more, if they don't want the kids making a noise they should provide somewhere for them to play. All the local SS offices are in a disgusting condition. We went up to the SS the other week with the CU and every time we raised our voices and complained they brought the shutters down and threatened to bring the police. We've put up with it for too long and now we have got the CU we're not going to take it any more.

Another thing is the local doctors on Kingsmead - they wouldn't give me a free sick note for my child for his school, although I'm on benefit and entitled for one. He does it to everyone, charges them 25p, 'cause not all of them know they should get them free. A right racket. I went to this doctor - Dr. C. - when I was three months pregnant. After examining me he said I was constipated and gave me laxative pills. If I had taken these the baby could have died.

I know from personal experience what vandalism is like on this estate. Last Bonfire night kids lit a fire in the middle of the estate and all the smoke was coming into my flat. The fire brigade came and the kids turned their hoses on them. Then the firemen turned the hoses on the kids. The next time they had to come down they had a police escort."

HACKNEY'S GHETTO

Kingsmead Estate is a prime example in Hackney of various councils deliberate policies of herding particular types of people into one estate.

On Kingsmead the figures are approx. Coloured Families, 50%, Families dependant on benefit, 20-25 %, OAP's 20%. this shows how the council is attempting to divert public attention away from the appalling material living conditions there, onto the people who actually have to live there. There's no one living on Kingsmead from choice. They don't need to say that the estate is in such a terrible condition because of the number of people on benefit, or coloured people. The press, the right wing, and the judges do it for them.

To hide their unwillingness to improve living conditions there, and their cynical to the point of deadly approach to health standards, they are prepared to create racial tension and hostility to people forced on benefit.

chris swift

WE WILL GIVE SPACE IN THIS PAPER TO ANY OF THE PEOPLE OR GROUPS CRITICISED IN THIS ARTICLE WHO WISH TO MAKE A REPLY.



Haggerston food co-op

When considering running a food-cooperative it is important that it is presented as a group of people getting together and nominating one or two of its members to do its shopping. If such an enterprise can be seen as a commercial venture or as open trading then one could easily become subject to pressure from local shopkeepers, the local Authority or the landlord of the property from which one operates.

We have found that the safest position to adopt is that of running a club whereby members pay a life membership fee of 1p for the service of having their shopping done for them. Although people are gaining far more advantage than this and the operation is a little more complex it is difficult to prove.

For about £45.00 you can start off with a very useful basic stock of groceries or vegetables both in terms of range of products and quantity. Washing powders, cereals and special offers to the trade are usually the items that make the best savings.

Fruit and veg

Fruit and vegetables can be obtained from any of the markets which supply the trade as long as you are prepared to buy a reasonable amount. Once you get to know some of the people who work in the market and tell them what you are doing, then, if our experience is anything to go by, they may well find a way for you whereby you can get your produce cheaper. For example, there may be small amounts of potatoes that a particular trader wants to get rid of fast once he has sent out his regular orders. Fruit and veg. in the cash and carries cost the earth.



For groceries and often basic household equipment the best thing to do is look around a few Cash and Carrys and choose the cheapest one. If you go along with a name that sounds right- Bert's Cafe or Dollis Hill Food Centre- and obviously intend to buy a reasonable amount then the cash and carry will probably be glad of your business. They are a bit wary of attracting too many non-traders so you will help yourself with odd white lie- and them.

In order that you can provide a fairly comprehensive and useful service it is essential that you make about £3.00 per month profit. This will enable you to buy new products and gradually add to your range of stock. Profit can be made either by selling all your goods at the buying in price and charging users a small sum each month or by adding ½p or 1p to each item. The more people that use the coop and the faster the turnover the better service you will be able to provide.

Our own coop is on a rundown estate and our members are not exactly rich yet people are still very apathetic about using us. We are prepared to cater for 400 families but still only about thirty of these are regular members. This means that our growth is very slow and that we must continue to spend money on leaflets.

Bulk buy

When beginning it is important that you buy bulk items such as gallons of orange juice or washing up liquid only when these are ordered beforehand otherwise you find your capital quickly tied up. You soon get to know what you can sell quickly. On the whole we have found that people do not buy in bulk and resist pressure to do so although they would obviously make greater savings this way.

If you are reasonably well organised you should be able to manage with only one visit to the cash and carry and one to the market each week. Both these places are open outside normal working hours so there should be no problem.

We operate from one room borrowed from a friend about 5x10 feet and with the aid of shelves we can house about 150 pounds worth of stock which is quite a lot.

For anyone interested in setting up a coop I must mention one brand of tinned foods, coffee, tea etc. This is Crescent. We have never been let down by this brand and it affords a considerable saving over the other brands. The different label means something like a 20p saving on a ½lb jar of coffee- and I'm talking in wholesale terms.

Peter Chambers, 17 Samuel House, Clarissa Street, London E.8. Tel. 01-249 4955 or 472 5961.

PRESS RELEASE: Stoke-Newington 5

A committee organised by two defendants acquitted in last year's Stoke-Newington 8 trial announced a new campaign to work for the release of the five now serving prison terms.

"We intend to forcibly raise once more the political implications of the entire trial, from the formation of the bomb squad to judgement and sentence of Justice James," the Stoke Newington Five Solidarity Committee said in its first press release. "We aim to build up political pressure for the release of the five."

"The trials of Prescott and Purdie and the Stoke Newington Eight took place at a time of deepening social crises, not just in Britain, accompanied by increasingly militant forms of struggle. A particular expression of this was the development in the late sixties of the student movement and the activities of predominantly young people in community and liberation groups.

"In this general atmosphere of the exploration of new forms of struggle it was likely that some people would turn to bombings, the more so because of the widespread development of this type of activity on the continent and in the USA.

"The reaction to this particular movement of young people and, more importantly the increased development of working class struggle has been the campaign of

'law and order' which is now being actively waged by the Tory government. This reaction has expressed itself in two ways. Firstly there has been the enactment of new class laws. The Industrial Relations Act has meant the banning of sympathy strikes, unofficial strikes and the blacking of goods. The legislation for the freeze means again trade unionists are liable to fines and imprisonment. There is a current legal attempt to limit traditional rights to take part in effective picketing. The immigration acts are vicious pieces of racist legislation designed to control and exclude black workers. In Northern Ireland the process can be seen at its clearest with the suspension of traditional legal rights like trial by jury and the introduction of internment.

"Secondly the Tories are making increased use of existing legislation against political militants. Some of the building workers active in the recent strike are threatened with conspiracy charges, three men have recently been found guilty of sedition, insiting British troops in Northern Ireland to disaffect the Scottish miners were prosecuted under the laws relating to 'unlawful assembly, rout and riot'. The present wave of strikes against the freeze makes it likely that the Emergency Powers Act will again be

put into effect. With this further illegalisation of struggles and the increased determination of the State to destroy opposition to it, it will become more and more necessary to defend political militants against the State. "It is in this total context that the trials of the the Stoke Newington Five must be considered. The conduct of the police during the investigation, the charges that were brought against them, the sentences they received were all shaped and determined by these processes. They add up to the fact that these were political trials and they were political prisoners."

John Barker, James Greenfield, Hilary Creek and Anna Mendelson, the four people convicted in the Stoke-Newington trial and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, are asking for money and books to allow them to study while in prison. John and Jim, who are both in Wormwood Scrubs Prison, are hoping to study Labour history, and would like reading lists, books and correspondence on the subject. They are especially interested in the U.S. Labour movement. John is also interested in Spanish. Hilary and Anna are studying Latin American history and Spanish.

Books and money for them can be sent to Stoke-Newington Five Solidarity Committee, c/o Mike Cohen, 54 Harcombe Rd, London N16.

PEOPLE'S NEWS SERVICE

the green grass

Angry are we
For we are to be
Grass for the rest of our lives
To be trodden on and kicked
And sat on and layed on
Why can't we be like the trees or the bees
Instead of the ground for the flies
For grass we are to be some people's delight
To others a new place
To build motorways by night
To some people a rubbish dump
But we very often don't get cleaned
By the people who are supposed to keep us
Some of us are lucky
For they are in gardens
But this does not stop people
Dropping litter over the walls
On us who are tall
Through those who are small.
Neil

A thirteen-year old boy from a local school.

TONY SOARES

On April 2nd I was convicted, after a month long trial, on two counts of "attempting to incite" an unknown reader of Grass Roots, black community newspaper, to make an explosive substance and commit arson on property unknown. It was the first time that a charge of "attempt to incite" has been brought against a publication in Britain, in other words a new charge has been created to add to the host of "conspiracy, soliciting to..., incitement" charges currently in use against political activists.

I was charged on an indictment containing four counts: attempting to encourage readers of Grass Roots to murder persons unknown; attempting to encourage readers of Grass Roots to unlawfully make and possess explosive substances; attempt to incite persons unknown to commit arson on property unknown; attempt to incite possession of firearms with intent to endanger life. All four charges related to a single article in Grass Roots Vol. 1 No. 4 which appeared in September 1971. The article entitled "On organising self-defence groups" was reprinted verbatim from 'The Black Panther' an American publication which is freely available in this country. Grass Roots reprinted this article in accordance with the tradition of black community newspapers. Because being a community newspaper, by definition it had to include articles submitted by members of the black community. Even though the editorial committee may have had reservations or disagree with the contents, style or political philosophy of a particular article. Nevertheless it was held by the court that while it was not an offence to circulate the original Black Panther newspaper, it was an offence to distribute (!) even a single copy of Grass Roots containing the reprinted article.

Jack Baksi

The police conceded that there probably would have been no prosecution had it not been a complaint from Jack Baksi, the Community Relations Officer for Hackney. He must bear the responsibility for this prosecution which has resulted in me spending five months in prison on remand, not to mention the sentence, the expense and the incalculable harm to race and community relations in this country.

The only person to seriously complain about the article in question was Jack Baksi. He referred it to the M.P. for Hackney, Stanley-Clinton Davis with instructions to raise the matter in Parliament. I must assume that Baksi was trying to get some cheap publicity for himself. His recent irresponsible statement that police should confiscate sound systems used in 'blues parties' seems to bear this out. He has no idea of the consequences of any attempt by the police to deprive black people of the only source of entertainment. But why S. Clinton Davis, whose solicitor's firm is representing the ten Irishmen on the Old Bailey bomb charge, made himself a party to this disgraceful complaint remains mystery, especially in view of his vocal condemnation of similar prosecutions of Jewish dissidents in Eastern Europe.

Special Branch

Clinton Davis did not raise the matter in Parliament but referred it to the Attorney General, Sir Peter Rawlinson who ordered the Director of Public Prosecutions to institute proceedings. Detective Inspector Hovell of the Special Branch, whose normal duties consist of surveillance of black organisations and their publications, was entrusted with the job of making further inquiries. He asked Baksi to make a statement for the prosecution but Baksi cowardly refused and, instead, sent Hovell to his friend Peter Slack, a schoolmaster in Upton House school. According to reliable sources D/I Hovell instructed Slack to purchase a copy of Grass Roots from Centreprise bookshop and sign a statement of complaint about the article on page 4. I cannot say whether Slack would have given evidence in a political trial, but the prosecution proceeded on the basis of Slack's statement.

It would be appropriate at this stage to question Baksi's for the job of maintaining good community relations. In view of his activities Hackney's black residents and ratepayers may wonder why the council has just spent £6000 on plush new offices for him when it is virtually impossible to get a council mortgage to buy a house or to obtain money for much needed recreational facilities for kids.

The Judge

The trial lasted a month and was quite clearly a political trial. It was presided over by Judge Alan King-Hamilton, of Nasty Tales fame, who once sent a black man, Peter Martin to prison for nine months for distributing a leaflet calling for a demonstration against police brutality in Brixton. The prosecution was led by Michael Worsley whose only claim to fame was that he was once sued for negligence by a certain Mr. Blondell, one of Rachman's rent collectors.

The Prosecution's case

All kinds of irrelevant and prejudicial evidence was introduced. The judge repeatedly stated to the jury that if people who come from abroad don't like the laws of this country they could go back to where they came from. Anybody who appeared to give evidence for the defence was called a "revolutionary full of hatred for the authorities" and therefore a liar. Dossiers kept by the Special Branch on political activists were disclosed even though they had never been arrested or convicted of any offence. People who attended the hearing in the public gallery had their names, addresses and dates of birth taken. The atmosphere at the trial was viciously intimidating with a number of Special Branch 'heavies' taking photographs of everybody concerned. The prosecutor and the judge relied more on racial prejudice of jurors to convict rather

than the evidence, which was virtually non-existent. Under such pressure it was not surprising that, after eight hours of deliberation, reached a compromise verdict acquitting me on two counts but finding me guilty, on majority verdicts, on the other two counts. After being remanded for medical reports to see if I was sane (!!) I was sentenced, rather surprisingly, to 200 hundred hours of community work, bound over for seven years and indirectly invited to leave the country and go elsewhere.

Conclusions

The lessons of this trial are quite clear. The ruling class feels itself threatened by the growth of community groups. People like Baksi feel themselves threatened by the rapid growth of black community groups like the Black Liberation Front that advocate self-help and self-reliance as an answer to racism, which makes the jobs of these careerists in the race relations industry superfluous. So they are prepared to go to any length to sabotage the efforts of community groups.

In conclusion I must say that we must learn the following lessons of this trial.

- Political trials are now a reality in Britain and we will have a lot more of them in the future.
- The chances of a black activist getting a fair trial are non-existent.
- The sentence imposed indicates the importance of political campaigns in support of those victimised.
- The race relations industry, the community relations officer and Stanley Clinton Davis M.P. have shown their true colours. Who is going to be their next victim?

The media and the black community

One of the reasons for the increasing tensions between the black and white communities has been the role of the media. There have been many cases of newspapers printing stories consisting of vast exaggerations and lies which would warrant charges of 'libel' or 'incitement' if they were printed in left wing or community newspapers. Our very own "Hackney Gazette" is often the source of such articles. The one relating to the trial of Tony Soares is a good example of this. It refers to Soares as a 'Race Hate Man' and 'A Man who set out to stir up feelings of hatred and violence among the coloured community against the white people'.

Dalston Storm?

The Gazette chooses to ignore the feelings that are liable to come to the surface from the inflammatory statements concerning the recent incident at Dalston police station on April 5th. The Evening Standard had a banner headline: "MOB STORMS POLICE STATION". And went on:

"A Mob of screaming youngsters, girls among them stormed an East London police station today trying to free a man police were questioning. Policemen were pushed and jostled. Punches were thrown and kicks aimed. Reinforcements had to be called as the 24 strong group, all coloured, invaded the charge room. Some police suffered what were described as superficial injuries. Scene of the siege was Dalston police station.

HOW IT BEGAN

The trouble appeared to start when the crew of a patrol car stopped a group of youths in St. Marks Rise, Dalston, around 10.30 last night. They quizzed a youth carrying a hockey stick. Soon the crowd swelled to more than 60. Fighting broke out and extra police arrived in a van. An eighteen year old youth was taken to the police station. As he was being interviewed in the charge room the "invaders" moved in! They forced their way in. The attack failed. They tried to drag a policeman out into the street. Out went a radio call for help. Reinforcements arrived and ejected the group."

To be fair the Hackney Gazette said there were only "25 youths".

What Really Happened

EIGHT black kids were walking up St. Marks Rise when a police car pulled up and told one of them, Danny McKenzie, that the WALKING STICK he was carrying was an offensive weapon. They tried to put him into the car, but he refused to go saying he hadn't done anything. A police van was called up and he was put into that. His friends were angered by the behaviour of the police and went to get Danny's brother, Liscon McKenzie, and the eight went to Dalston Police Station. As Liscon walked into the Station a policeman started to hit him, so Liscon, naturally, defended himself. A friend tried to help him but more police came through and so they ran out into the street. There they waited for Liscon, but the police began to disperse them. Both the brothers were charged with assault on the police.

information

Hackney Claimants Union

For help in all matters concerning Social Security.
Meetings 12.30 Wednesday.
Office 2-5 Tues. & Thurs. at Centerprise.

Homerton/South Hackney Claimants Union

5 Templemead House
Kingsmead Estate Centre
Homerton Road, E.9.
Telephone 985 3987
Meetings Monday 7.30-10.00p.m.
Office Friday 10.30-12noon
Monday



Legal Aid and Advice If you need it just ask

Free aid and advice on housing legal and social security matters. Thursday evenings between 6.30-7.30. At Centerprise.

ADVISE

313, Upper St. N.1. 226 9365.

RELEASE

1, Elgin Ave. W.9. 289 1123.
24 hr. emergency-603 8654.

P R A

PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
21a, Kingsland High St. 254 9753.

WOMEN'S WORKSHOP

WOMENS LIBERATION WORKSHOP
3/4 Shavers Place. S.W.1. 389 3918



DEFENDANTS' UNION

A collective of defendants, McKenzie Advisors and radical law students has announced the formation of a defendants' union, to strengthen and support people who want to conduct their own defence in the courts. The collective has recently published the 2nd. issue of their magazine 'Up against the Law'.

Up against the Law works from 1, Elgin Ave. W.9. 289-3881. Its legal advice and people's law forums are every Wednesday afternoon at the above address.

MENTAL PATIENTS' UNION

The union has been set up "in order to combat the reactionary institutions of mental hospitals and manipulative psychiatry".

c/o 97, Prince of Wales Rd., Kentish Town, N.W.5.
267 2770.

Working party meets at this address, every Wednesday 7pm.
- open to patients, ex-patients, or out patients of psychiatric units.

HOMELESS ACTION

LAND FOR PEOPLE NOT PROFIT.

HAC: contact 722 0783
693 4066

or write to :Leighton Evans.
173, Gloucester Ave., N.W.1.

Protection Prevention

Juvenile Aid Centre - 196, Sussex Gardens. W.2.
Protection Prevention helps get children out of care and can prevent their going into care. When you or your children are being treated unjustly by the authorities ring PP and together we will straighten it out.

PROP

PRESERVATION OF THE RIGHTS OF PRISONERS.

Prisoners are treated as less than human beings; they are stigmatised; their rights are taken away; they are cut off from the world and surrounded in secrecy.

P.R.O.P. supports alternative policies more constructive than imprisonment; but in order to bring about urgently needed reforms in the present penal system, it demands that prisoners should immediately be given their rights set out in their 'Prisoners' Charter'.

For more information / applications for membership contact:

LONDON ORGANISER OF P.R.O.P.,
51, Bride St., N.7.

607 - 2698.

Backyard Press

EAST LONDON BACKYARD PRESS.
75, ROMAN ROAD., E.2.

980 - 9845.

East Information

24 hour information service.
103/105 Market St., E.6.
Tel: 471 2276.

N CCL

152, Camden High St., N.W.1.
Tel: 485 9497.

GLF

GAY LIBERATION FRONT.
5, Caledonian Road, N.1.
Tel: 471 - 2276.

community engineers

If you are suffering due to the lack or disrepair of basic amenities in or around your home such as lighting, heating, windows, locks, plumbing, water, gas, cooker, wiring, doors etc you should call into the office because community engineers can advise and complete work for you if "A" you really cannot pay, "B" you can only just pay for some material costs only.

Community Engineers will be found at back of side 146 Gt. Western Rd., W.11.
01-229-7538. 11am til 6pm on the corner of Great Western/ Westbourne Park Roads. For emergency: 01-229-0302.



Under Fives Unite

Women's Liberation-initiated Children's Community Centre - council-financed, community-run pre-school day centre - is holding a meeting to offer information and advice to anyone interested in setting up similar centres.

THURSDAY MAY 3rd. 8pm. WINScombe HALL, WINScombe ST. OFF CHESTER RD. LONDON N.19.
272-9383.

wanted urgently!

Qualified Playgroup Organiser afternoon session of a good PPA playgroup in the Leyton area. Phone:

Di Bailey 556 8605. or
Ann Lawson 556 5161.



Socialist Labour League

ALL TRADES UNION ALLIANCE
MEETINGS are held at 8pm. on alternate Wednesdays (May 9 and May 23) at Hackney Central Hall (opp. Town Hall, Mare St.)

All Out Mayday!

ALL OUT MAY DAY
TUES MAY 1ST.
Support TUC's Day of Protest.
Rally 10.30am. Hackney Town Hall Mare St.
Hackney Trades Council.

Hackney Under Fives Committee

The Hackney Under Fives Committee was formed following a public meeting held at Harrington Hill School on the 6th of February to discuss the needs of and provision for under-fives in Hackney.

The committee was formed with the intention of coordinating the efforts of everyone concerned with providing facilities for the under fives, and trying to ensure that each district of Hackney was being explored and catered for.

The group is busy making contacts in the Social Services and in the Education Authority, and has already attracted the support of people throughout Hackney working on various under fives projects.

The Secretary of the group can be contacted at:
36, Colvestone Crescent, E.8.
Tel: 254 4208.

The group welcomes interest and information from anyone concerned with the under-fives.

The next meeting is at Harrington Hill School on the 10th May, 10 from 7.00 - 9.00 when it is hoped to discuss matters of importance with Martin Ottolangui, the Leader of the Council.

International Socialists

PUBLIC MEETINGS and PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETINGS are open to all, and are held at 8pm on Monday nights at 'The Rose and Crown' pub, corner of Albion Rd. and Stoke Newington Church St., N.16. (opposite the Town Hall - bus 73).

Musicians forming Music Collectives to pool resources, reduce rip offs and organise their own gigs. Contact Dave c/o Melanie Music Society, 32 Sutherland Point, Tiger Way, E.5.

The premises at 248 Bethnal Green Road, formerly occupied by Agitprop, have been taken over by Bethnal Rouge, a commune of gay people. The shop is continuing to function with the emphasis on gays', women's and children's books.

INDO CHINA - SUPPORT MUST CONTINUE
Make the US imperialists get out and keep out of Indo China. Make Thieu free ALL the political prisoners. Recognise the P.R.G and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Recognise the Government of National Union in Cambodia. Stop all British aid to Saigon.

Demonstration May 5th 2.00pm. Trafalgar Square, London.

Meeting and march to the Saigon and US embassies. Indo China Solidarity Campaign.

If you have any information you want published in this paper send or bring along by 19th May.

From 8th May: 'The Mother' by Bertolt Brecht. Performances at 7.30. 50p admission. HALF MOON GALLERY. 27, Alie St. N.1. Photographs by Yochanan (John) Kinory. Till May 20. Thurs. to Sun. 12-6.

HOXTON HALL
128a Hoxton St., N.1. 739 5431. HOXTON FAIR - MAY 19th. Sale of hand made toys, pottery, etc. Music Hall, Entertainments.

WHITECHAPEL GALLERY.
Whitechapel High St. E.1. April 25 - May 23rd: Historic Exhibition of Trade Union and Labour Movement. Banners from 1821 onwards. OPEN: Tuesday - Sunday 11am - 6pm. Shut Mondays.

PEOPLE'S NEWS SERVICE.
149, Clapham Rd. S.W.9. 735-2088. Publishes a weekly bulletin of news ignored or distorted in the 'straight' press. Subscription: £1 for 10 issues.

SILKSCREEN WORKSHOP
Facilities for silkscreen work and learning the processes involved. All enquiries to Harriet at Centerprise. 254 1620.

do was to think up some likely speakers and get in touch with them. Two people that sprang to mind almost immediately were George Melly and John Peel, who were both very helpful and agreed to talk (although I had to hassle the BBC a lot to get through to Peel). Friends were very helpful suggesting speakers, and after phoning people like Charles Fox and Bob Harris (again hassling the BBC), we drew up a list of talks and arranged some provisional dates in discussions at WEA meetings.

SPEAKERS

Then I phoned John Collis of Time Out who suggested some other speakers and after a few false starts and many phone calls I got in touch with Mike Roe and John Pidgeon and finalised the dates and talks. Further WEA meetings provided us with a pub, but because of a mix-up with the landlord, who first agreed to let us use it, and then realised it was booked up on Tuesday nights, we had to go through the lengthy process of finding another pub at the last minute.

POSTERS

When we had done that the only thing left to do then was to advertise the course - to get some posters and leaflets done and get them distributed around Hackney in the schools and libraries etc.

steve horrigan

on and designed the poster and leaflet and through the WEA we got hold of a printer who ran them off quite cheaply for us. Also John Collis gave the course a plug in Time Out.

COUNT DOWN

So there we were on Tuesday 20 March, waiting apprehensively wondering how many people were going to turn up and if the course was going to be a success - fortunately lots of people turned up and the first talk went off very well and so did George Melly's and indeed all the others so far. By the time this article gets into print there will be three talks left: Charles Fox (Jazz) on 1 May, John Peel (the 'underground') on 8 May, and Bob Harris (Contemporary Pop) on 18 May - all at The Swan on the corner of Kingsland Rd. and Richmond Rd.

DO IT YOURSELF

A course of this kind is really quite easy to set up. All you need is a telephone some friends to help and a lot of luck. The course would never have got started but for the WEA, who put up the money for the course, paid for the speakers, the cost of producing the posters and leaflets, and for the hire of the pub. The WEA is an organisation that anybody with any ideas can use. So if you have any ideas use it.



SUBSCRIPTION FORM

SUBSCRIPTION RATES ARE 75P FOR TEN ISSUES INCLUDING POSTAGE. SEND TO HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS, 34 DALSTON LANE, E8. CHEQUES/PO PAYABLE TO HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

ROGER

one day A boy Named Jim went For a walk
and he met a girl and the girl was a princess
and she took him to a castle and she showed
him the bedroom and later they got married and
they lived happily ever after
The END

By a seven year old boy from a local school.

WILLIAM MORRIS and the meaning of May Day

For many hundreds of years, May Day has been a people's holiday: a celebration of growth on the land and a time to think of the future—to hope and to organise to fulfill that hope. For the last eighty years, growing out of that tradition, May Day has been an international festival of the Labour movement.

This year we will witness the biggest May Day demonstration that this country has seen for many years, and it is as well to remind ourselves of the nature of our struggle, and to connect ourselves with this great tradition of hope and commitment. For many of the issues that faced the labour movement of previous eras still face us today, although many of them have taken new forms and perhaps seem less clear-cut. It is even more confusing when we have to recognise that the classic problems remain despite long periods of Labour government, government by the party that for so long many of us felt was the one built to bring about the objectives of a socialist struggle.

Perhaps we need to remind ourselves more frequently of what it was that we hoped for, by our involvement in the labour movement, and it may be that we could well do this by re-assessing the contribution that William Morris made to the socialist movement in this country, as a means of reminding us of the degradation of human life under capitalism, and the possibilities offered us by a socialist reorganisation of society.

William Morris was born in Walthamstow in 1834. He came from a wealthy family and for many years inhabited the self-contained aesthetic world of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. However a growing awareness of the selfishness and the irrelevance of 'pure' artistic activity, made him find common cause with the socialist movement of the time. Art students and 'culture vultures' might well take note of Morris's strictures against an involvement in art that separates itself off from a total understanding of society and a desire to intergrate the two.

"The consciousness of revolution stirring amidst our hateful modern society prevented me, luckier than many others of artistic perceptions, from crystallising into a mere railer against progress on the one hand, and on the other from wasting my time and energy in any of the nervous schemes by which the quasi-artistic of the middle-classes hope to make art grow when it has no longer any root, and thus I became a practical Socialist."

His awareness of what motive power of capitalist economics—profit—involves for everyday life is evident from this strikingly prophetic comment:

"Is money to be gathered? Cut down the pleasant trees among the houses, pull down the venerable and ancient buildings for the money that a few square yards of London dirt will fetch; blacken rivers, hide the sun and poison the air with smoke and worse, and it's nobody's business to see to it and mend it."

But Morris was by no means an ineffectual romantic, as many have have characterised him. He was actively involved in the socialist movement, he had studied Marx, and he was closely concerned with the problems of strategy and agency in discussing the conditions under which socialism would emerge. 'News from Nowhere' is without doubt his finest book, and as a text from modern socialists it can hardly be bettered. 'News from Nowhere' describes a visit into the future to the achieved socialist society. This form enabled Morris to tackle many of the problems which even now confuse us as to what is meant by the term socialism. He tackled them simply by showing them in action. In the book, the author is taken on a guided tour of London during which he asks his guide many questions as to how the new society is organised. Central to the system of socialism is the attitude towards work. For Morris, there could be no work which was not of direct use to others:

"The wares which we make are made because they are needed; men make for their neighbour's use as if they are making for themselves, not for a vague market of

which they have no control..... Nothing can be made except for genuine use; therefore no inferior goods are made. Moreover, as we have now found out what we want, so we make no more than what we want; and as we are not driven to make a vast quantity of useless things, we have time and resources enough to consider our pleasure in making them. All work which would be irksome to do by hand is done by immensely improved machinery; and in all work which it is a pleasure to do by hand machinery is done without....."

Labour and Life

Here we come to a particularly urgent problem, whether technology is going to enslave us or liberate us. The solution in fact is only soluable under socialism which for the first time will enable us to choose whether we want certain technological advances or whether we don't. Under capitalism, technology is subject to no social responsibilities, only for profit, so that even now we witness whole communities—large towns even—destroyed by unemployment in the interest of high finance allied with newer means of production. Of course, such processes are disguised nowadays with a very impressive sounding jargon—'rationalisation' 'labour redeployment'—which unfortunately flow as glibly from the mouths of Labour politicians as from the mouths of the Tories as well.

Theoretical Practice

Every conceivable social issue that we can raise, Morris deals with in this book: the relationship between art and everyday life (they are totally intergrated); the politics of the new society (there are none); the liberation of women (achieved without some of the false oppositions encountered at present); education (since the whole of society is educational there is no need for specialised institutions) and so on.

Perhaps the most telling moment in the novel comes when the visitor notices the elderly socialist refer to the new society by saying 'now we have got back to our childhood again'. For Morris, and I hope for us, childhood in fact presents us with a model of what socialism can offer us: the abolition of the distinction between manual and intellectual labour, the abolition of the distinctions between work and play, and being honest and open about emotions and feelings without shame or cynicism.

We are lucky, locally, to have the William Morris museum so close to hand in Walthamstow. Even though the collection of sketches, wallpaper and weaving designs, political pamphlets, etc. is small, one can get a glimpse of the range and complexity of Morris's achievement. The museum is well worth a visit.

Morris's ideas and writings will only seem 'fanciful' or 'immature' or 'unrealistic' to those who basically are not prepared to confront and challenge the existing priorities of capitalism and who have not the will or energy to work for change. Socialism will not come from the skies or arise spontaneously; it has to be worked for. May Day provides us once again for an opportunity to acknowledge our position; to honour those who struggled before us, to remind ourselves of the old demands, to talk to each other and together build a movement that will bring about a society of liberty, equality and fraternity.

In 1887, during a peaceful working-men's demonstration, one of the demonstrators, Alfred Linell, was trampled on by a police horse and died from his injuries. William Morris gave the graveside speech:

"Our friend who lies here has had a hard life and met with a hard death, and if society had been differently constituted his life might have been a delightful, a beautiful and happy one. It is our business to begin to organise for the purpose of seeing that such things shall not happen; to try and make this earth a beautiful and happy place."

This is what May Day is all about.

Ken Worpole